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AUTHOR Riley, Barb
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ABSTRACT

Current literature about children of one-parent families can provide educators with information on what effects living in a one-parent family have on a child's personality, behavior, and academic performance. Research indicates that at the elementary level children often fear abandonment, act aggressively, and display attention-seeking behaviors after their parents have separated. At the secondary level, such children often blame themselves, display anger or withdrawal, and have difficulty with heterosexual relationships. In some cases the experience leads to greater independence and personal strength. Discussion groups and peer counseling are often helpful counseling techniques for children in one-parent families. (Author/JAC)

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EDUCATION AND THE CHILDREN OF ONE-PARENT FAMILIES: A BACKGROUND PAPER

Manitoba Department of Education
Planning and Research Branch

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Prepared by:
Barb Riley
Research Branch
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M.P. Yakimishyn
Director of Research

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this background paper is to provide educators in Manitoba with information on the incidence, effects, counselling techniques, and practical considerations associated with children of one-parent families.

In 1976, one-parent families constituted approximately 10% of Manitoba's total family population. Moreover, based on 1979 estimates, 12% of all families in Manitoba with children under 18 years of age were headed by one parent. On the basis of an average class size of 25 students, in 1979 the average number of children from one-parent families enrolled in Manitoba's schools would be three per class. The reality of these facts suggest implications for the schooling of children.

Research indicates that at the elementary school level, children often fear abandonment, act aggressively, and display attention-seeking behavior after their parents have separated. In addition, researchers agree that children in elementary school who do not live with their father should be exposed to a male role model. Teachers sometimes are more aware than parents of how well a child is coping with their parents' divorce, because children often attempt to conceal their grief from parents, but not from teachers.

At the secondary school level, children of single parent families often blame themselves for the parent's absence, display anger and/or withdrawal, approach new relationships with apprehension, and have difficulty resolving conflicts in heterosexual relationships. Often, the reassurance and security of discipline are required after their parents' divorce. Moreover, adolescents have reported that they are more comfortable talking to a classroom teacher about their problems than they are to members of a school's professional support staff. However, benefits which adolescents have reported include increased feelings of responsibility and independence, greater knowledge of parents' personal qualities, increased ability to cope with people and situations which may arise, and increased personal strength.

Teachers have reported that children of all ages showed marked behavior changes at school, more restlessness and daydreaming, and difficulties in concentrating following their parents' separation. More children from one-parent families received letter grades of "D" or "F" than children from two-parent families; in addition, fewer children from one-parent families received letter grades of "A" or "B". Children of one-parent families were more likely to be tardy or truant, were suspended more often, and, at the secondary level, were more likely to be expelled or to drop out of school.

Two counselling techniques that could be implemented in an educational setting are discussion groups and peer counselling. Practical considerations suggested for use by schools ranged from alerting teachers to biases toward two-parent families to provision of both practical and emotional support to children.

Although not all children are affected in the same manner, or to the same extent, single parenthood does appear to affect school behavior and performance among children. Thus, the effects that living in a one-parent family has on a child's academic achievement and behavior at school might well be considered by educators.

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I. INTRODUCTION

One-parent families result from the death or divorce of one parent or from unwed motherhood. Between 1971 and 1976, the number of one-parent families* increased at a faster rate than did the number of two-parent families. In 1976, 12%, or approximately one of every eight, of Canada's children were living in one-parent families.

As the majority (69%) of the children living in one-parent families in Canada are under the age of eighteen, the impact and long term effects of living in a one-parent family should be of particular interest to educators. Many schools, noting the increasing percentage of their student population who live with one parent, have adopted policies that reflect some of the special needs of single parents and their children.

The purpose of this background paper was to review current literature on children of one-parent families in order to provide educators with information on what, if any, effects living in a one-parent family have on a child's personality, behavior and academic performance. A bibliography of relevant literature has been included at the end of this report for those who may wish to read further in the area. Because the literature available focussed on children whose parents had divorced, the findings from the literature review apply almost exclusively to children whose parents are divorced. In addition, caution should be exercised in generalizing the findings reported to all children from one-parent families, as there are many factors that will affect each child's reaction to his/her change in family structure. Nevertheless, this overview does provide information on the ways in which some schools have provided children of one-parent families with support and guidance.

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*For the purpose of this report, the following definitions apply:

One-Parent Family - refers to a parent, regardless of marital status, with one or more children living in the same dwelling.

Husband-Wife Family - refers to a husband and wife, with or without children or to two persons who cohabit with or without children.

II. INCIDENCE

The percentages of one-parent families, by province and territory in 1976, are presented in Table 1. As can be seen from Table 1, in the majority of the provinces, one-parent families represented approximately 10% of the total family population. In Manitoba, there were 24,735 one-parent families; this constituted 9.8% of Manitoba's total family population. The Northwest Territories had the greatest percentage of families that were headed by one parent (11%). Newfoundland and Saskatchewan were the provinces with the lowest percentage of families that were headed by one parent, (8.7% and 8.5% respectively).

TABLE 1

FAMILY STRUCTURE IN CANADA AND THE PROVINCES IN 1976*

	Type of Family		
	Total** Families	One-Parent Families	% of Families that are One-Parent
Canada	5,727,895	559,330	9.8
Newfoundland	124,655	10,800	8.7
Prince Edward Island	27,560	2,875	10.4
Nova Scotia	200,480	21,470	10.7
New Brunswick	162,030	16,160	10.0
Quebec	1,540,400	158,900	10.3
Ontario	2,104,345	202,450	9.6
Manitoba	251,975	24,735	9.8
Saskatchewan	225,685	19,105	8.5
Alberta	448.770	41,200	9.2
British Columbia	628,445	60,200	9.6
Yukon	4,930	500	10.1
Northwest Territories	8,420	955	11.3

*Based on total population of respondents.

**As "Total Families" denotes families with or without children, the percentages of single parent families, compared to families with children, are larger than those presented in the table.

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue 93-822: Table 6. Families by Family Structure and Family Type, for Canada and Provinces, 1971 and 1976, May, 1978.

The percentages for one-parent families, with all of their children under eighteen years of age, are presented in Table 2. These figures are based on estimates derived in 1979. As can be seen from Table 2, an estimated 12% of all families in Canada with all children under 18 years of age were headed by one parent. British Columbia had the greatest percentage of one-parent families with all children under 18 years of age (14%), while Newfoundland had the lowest percentage (6%). The incidence rate for Manitoba was the same as that for Canada (12%), with approximately 13,800 one-parent families. Assuming that the average class had 25 students, in 1979, in Manitoba, the number of children from one-parent families would average three per class.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGES OF FAMILIES WITH ALL OF THEIR CHILDREN LESS THAN 18 YEARS OF AGE HEADED BY ONE PARENT BY PROVINCE

	Percentage of One-Parent Families in Province With All Children Under 18 Years	
	(N)	%
Canada	(338,800)	12%
Newfoundland	(4,200)	6%
Prince Edward Island	(1,400)	10%
Nova Scotia	(11,700)	12%
New Brunswick	(10,000)	11%
Quebec	(80,000)	11%
Ontario	(129,700)	13%
Manitoba	(13,800)	12%
Saskatchewan	(11,200)	10%
Alberta	(34,300)	13%
British Columbia	(42,500)	14%

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue 91-204: Table 3. Census families by age of children at home and family status, Canada and the Provinces, June 1, 1979.

Table 3 shows the change which occurred in one-parent families and husband-wife families from 1971 to 1976 in Manitoba and Canada. As can be seen in Table 3, in both Manitoba and Canada, the number of one-parent families increased at a faster rate than the number of husband-wife families. In Manitoba, between 1971 and 1976, the number of one-parent families increased by 9%, while the number of husband-wife families increased by 7%. In Canada, the number of one-parent families increased by 17%, while the number of husband-wife families increased by 13% during this period.

TABLE 3

INCREASES IN ONE-PARENT FAMILIES AND HUSBAND-WIFE FAMILIES FROM 1971 - 1976*

	Year		
	1971 (N)	1976 (N)	Increase (%)
Canada			
One-Parent Families	477,525	559,330	17%
Husband-Wife Families	4,575,640	5,168,360	13%
Manitoba			
One-Parent Families	22,615	24,735	9%
Husband-Wife Families	211,980	227,240	7%

*Based on total population of respondents.

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue 93-822: Table 6. Families by Family Structure and Family Type, for Canada and Provinces, 1971 and 1976, May, 1978.

Changes in family structure from 1971 to 1976 in Manitoba and Canada are presented in Table 4. In 1976, in both Manitoba and Canada, 84% and 83%, respectively, of one-parent families were headed by females. Thus, in 1976, in both Manitoba and Canada, there were approximately five times as many one-parent families headed by females as there were one-parent families headed by males. Since recent Canadian research has revealed that women who head families earn 50% less income than men who head families (CSSE Newsletter, November, 1979), many one-parent families may experience financial difficulties.

TABLE 4

CHANGES IN FAMILY STRUCTURE FROM 1971 TO 1976 IN CANADA AND MANITOBA*

	Year									
	1971					1976				
			One-Parent Families					One-Parent Families		
	Total Families (N)	Husband-Wife Families (N)	Total (N)	Male Parent (%)	Female Parent (%)	Total Families (N)	Husband-Wife Families (N)	Total (N)	Male Parent (%)	Female Parent (%)
Canada	5,053,170	4,575,640	477,525	21%	79%	5,727,895	5,168,560	559,330	17%	83%
Manitoba	235,595	211,980	22,615	21%	79%	251,975	227,240	24,735	16%	84%

*Based on total population of respondents.

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue 93-822: Table 6. Families by Family Structure and Family Type, for Canada and Provinces, 1971 and 1976, May, 1978.

In order to provide a more specific, and recent, example of single parenthood incidence within Manitoba, data were obtained from Winnipeg School Division. Percentages of students from one-parent families in three areas of Winnipeg by level of school in 1980 are presented in Table 5. In 1980, the inner city area had the greatest percentage of both elementary and secondary students who were from one-parent families (38% and 40%, respectively). However, single parenthood is not restricted to the inner city area. Among the "mid-city" schools, incidence rates for students from one-parent families at the elementary and secondary levels were 26% and 30% respectively. Within non-inner city schools, 16% of the students at the elementary level and 21% of students at the secondary level were from one-parent families.

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS FROM ONE-PARENT FAMILIES IN THREE AREAS OF WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION BY LEVEL OF SCHOOL IN 1980

	Area*		
Level	Inner-City	Mid-City	Non Inner-City
Elementary	38%	26%	16%
Secondary	40%	30%	21%

*As defined by Winnipeg School Division #1.

Source: Devine, R. Inner City Criteria Local Data Collection, 1980.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE EFFECTS OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD ON SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Recent research provides many insights into the ways children adjust to, and accept, changes in their family structure. It has been found that a child's age, his/her relationship with one or both parents, the reasons he/she believes to underlie one parent's absence, and the attitudes of others towards the child and his/her family, have an important influence on how living with one parent, instead of two, affects a child. These factors make it extremely difficult to generalize the findings of research studies to all children of one-parent families. Therefore, each child's situation must be assessed according to its own unique circumstances.

A. Effects on Child's Personality and Behavior

A child's age at the time that the change from a two-parent to a one-parent family occurs has been shown to affect the way in which he/she responds and adjusts to the new family structure (Francke, 1980; Hetherington, 1979b; Kelly and Wallerstein, 1979). An examination of the effects that living in a one-parent family has on the personality of elementary school-aged children, and adolescent children is presented in the following discussion.

i) Children of Elementary School Age (5 to 12 Years of Age)

Helplessness. Children in this age bracket, whose parent is absent as a result of divorce, often feel helpless and confused by the sudden change in their family structure (Francke, 1980; Kelly and Wallerstein, 1979). According to Francke (1980) and Kelly and Wallerstein (1979), the children's feelings of helplessness evolve from the fact that their lives have undergone major changes that they could not foresee, much less prevent. This lessened sense of control is often coupled with apprehension about the future. Kelly and Wallerstein (1979) conducted a five year longitudinal study of 131 children, who were 3 to 18 years of age at the time of their parents' marital separation. They found that after their parents' separation, children perceived the world to be less reliable, less predictable and less concerned with their future hopes and needs. Children in the primary grades feared abandonment by their custodial parent, and made noticeable attempts to stay near their parent and/or teacher. As children of this age rely almost implicitly on adults to fulfill their basic needs, they need

reassurance that there is, and will continue to be, someone in their lives who will provide them with love and security. In some cases, however, this reassurance is not forthcoming, as the custodial parent struggles to cope with his/her own feelings about the divorce and attempts to assimilate the change in his/her role in the family. Kelly and Wallerstein (1979) also found that, following the separation, many children received less attention from their parents, and therefore, experienced intense feelings of loneliness. Many of these children felt that they needed some type of support, but did not know from where, or from whom, to obtain it.

Needs for Attention. Some children resorted to attention-seeking behavior, both at home and at school, in what seemed to be attempts to dispell their loneliness and strengthen their sense of security and self-worth. Kelly and Wallerstein (1977) found that teachers often became stable figures in these children's lives and were, in fact, sometimes more aware of how well a child was coping with his/her parents' divorce than were the child's parents. This was due to the fact that children attempted to conceal their grief from their parents but made use of outlets at school for their fears and anger. Teachers who organized groups of children of divorced parents found that the members shared their experiences, gave each other information and helped each other clarify their roles in their families (Drake, 1979). Groups such as these may play an important role in helping children to understand and cope with their feelings about their parents' divorce. Similar groups could also be set up so as to allow children whose parent has died to express their feelings and compare ways of coping with their grief.

Male Role Model. Professionals with expertise in this field of study agree that children of this age bracket who do not live with their father should be exposed to a male role model (Gardner, 1970; Wallerstein, 1979). For the children of divorced parents, some have concluded it is preferable that the child's father act as a role model and that he and the child visit each other frequently (Hetherington, 1979b; Weiss, 1979a). According to Weiss (1979a) easy access to both parents may be essential to the well being of young children. Unless a stressful situation resulted, frequent availability of the father was found by Hetherington (1979b) to be associated with positive adjustment and social relations. This was especially true for boys. When studying the self-

esteem of boys in father-absent homes, Lowenstein (1978) found that boys who saw their father at least once a month had more positive self concepts than did boys who saw their fathers less than once a month. However, if the father was not available, some researchers recommended that the child have extended contact with a male role model. Gardner, (1970) author of The Boys' and Girls' Book About Divorce, suggested that schools, churches or clubs could supply the child with male role models. Gardner stated that children who spend little or no time with their fathers need male role models. According to Gardner, these children must be reassured that they are still worthy of love, although their fathers may not love them. Wallerstein's research (1979) revealed that children who were depressed, and had low-esteem five years after their parents' separation, were most often those who felt rejected by their fathers.

Aggressiveness. Kelly and Wallerstein (1979) also noted marked changes in the behavior of the children they studied. After their parents' separation, elementary school children displayed a higher level of aggressive behavior than they had before their parents' divorce. They were more likely to engage in direct angry verbal attacks after their parents' separation. Parents interviewed by Kelly and Wallerstein (1979) reported increasing numbers of discipline problems and an increase in rebelliousness in their children after their separation.

ii) Children of Secondary School Age (13 to 18 Years of Age)

Anger and Withdrawal. Adolescent children whose parent is absent as a result of divorce may respond to the change in family structure with feelings of anger and/or withdrawal (Kelly and Wallerstein, 1977, 1979). Some adolescents, frustrated by their inability to prevent the changes in family structure from occurring, blamed themselves for their parent's absence. Although children of this age may appear less in need of reassurance of their parents' love than the younger children, they should be absolved of any feelings of guilt or self-blame. If their parents are divorcing, they must be assured that they are not to blame for their parents' unhappiness and that they are still an important part of each parent's life.

Vulnerability. Mavis Hetherington (1979b), in her study of children of divorced parents, found that adolescents could accurately assign responsibility for their parents' divorce and cope with feelings of loyalty toward both parents to a greater degree than could younger children. However, Sorosky (1977) found that adolescents were vulnerable to the stresses and tensions surrounding their parents' divorce. Sorosky (1977) studied the psychological effects of divorce on adolescent children and found that one of the adolescent children's most specific responses to their parents' divorce was a "neurosis of abandonment". These adolescents approached every new relationship with apprehension and with the expectation they would be left or rejected. According to Sorosky, the divorce-induced loss of a parent may have been more difficult for the child to cope with than losing a parent through death, because the child of divorcing parents often felt a concomitant loss of love.

Fear of Losing Love. Fear of losing love, or being hurt by someone loved, often became apparent when adolescents of divorced parents began to date (Sorosky, 1977). Some adolescents were found to shy away from establishing close relationships with members of the opposite sex while others formed intense, lasting relationships which may have been unconscious attempts to strengthen their sense of security. Sorosky (1977) found that when the adolescents became involved in heterosexual relationships they often did not know how to resolve conflicts that arose, perhaps because they lacked models of constructive conflict resolution.

Heterosexual Interactions. The dating patterns of adolescent girls whose fathers were absent have received considerable attention from researchers. Sorosky's research (1977) revealed that some of the girls, attempting to find father figures, engaged in sexual relationships with older men or married at a young age. Hetherington's research (1971) reported that adolescent girls who had grown up without a father displayed inappropriate patterns of behavior in relating to men. The reason for the father's absence affected aspects of the girl's behavior towards men. Girls whose fathers were absent as a result of divorce exhibited "tension" and "inappropriately assertive" behavior with male peers or adults. Girls whose fathers had died exhibited "severe sexual anxiety," "shyness" and "discomfort" around men. According to

Hetherington (1971), these patterns of behavior may have resulted from the fact that the girls had not had the opportunity to acquire social skills conducive to appropriate heterosexual interactions.

Effect on Self-Perception. Interviews conducted by Robson (1979), with adolescent children of divorced parents, revealed the children's perceptions of how they were affected by their parents' divorce. When Robson asked adolescents what they perceived to have lost as a result of their parents' separation, they reported that they were less secure, had less respect and affection for their parents, and felt that they lacked a male or female role model. An increased sense of responsibility and independence, a greater knowledge of their parents' personal qualities, a greater ability to "cope with people and life in general" and increased personal strength were perceived by the adolescents to be benefits gained from their parents' separation (Robson, 1979).

Need for Reassurance and Discipline. Although adolescents may have less difficulty coping with their parents' divorce than younger children, Sorosky (1977) stated that adolescents need the reassurance and security of discipline after parents divorce. Teachers, therefore, in acting as discipline figures at school, may provide adolescents with a sense of continuity and security. Adolescents interviewed by Robson (1979), agreed that teachers who showed personal interest in them by talking to them, or seeing them outside of class, helped them to cope with the stress experienced throughout their parents' separation. These children seemed to feel more comfortable talking to a classroom teacher, rather than to members of the school's professional support staff.

B. Effects on Child's School Behavior and Academic Performance

The following research findings on the ways in which living in a one-parent family affects a child's school behavior and academic performance, apply to children of both elementary and secondary school age. For this reason, unless the citation is specific to one age group, it may be considered to be applicable to both.

Behavioral Effects. Kelly and Wallerstein (1979) studied the effect of parental separation on both the personality and school performance of children 3 to 18 years at the time of their parents' marital separation. They found that, while the majority of the children showed marked changes in behavior at school in the months following their parents' separation, their reactions

to the change in their family structure varied in intensity and mode of expression. These changes in behavior were difficult for both teachers and the child's peers to predict. As a result, some children inadvertently alienated their peers who felt uncomfortable with the change in their friend's behavior. In 50% of the children whose parents had recently separated, teachers noted an increase in restlessness, which they accredited to a high level of anxiety. Teachers also noted that many children experienced new difficulties in concentrating and a substantial increase in daydreaming. Kelly and Wallerstein (1979) found no significant age or sex differences for these findings. The increased daydreaming, concentration difficulties, and unhappiness at their parents' separation, resulted in a decline in academic achievement for 20% of the children included in Kelly and Wallerstein's study. Some of the children, especially those in the upper elementary and secondary grades, displayed minimal observable disruptions and no decline in academic performance. Kelly and Wallerstein (1979) accredited this finding to the children's age; by adolescence, the capacity to function academically is usually autonomous and, therefore, less vulnerable to temporary disruption.

Academic Performance. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (1980), surveyed twenty-six American schools and found that 38% of elementary school children from one-parent families received grades of D or F or grades of 50-70. In contrast, 23% of the children from two-parent families attained similar levels of achievement. Secondary students had a distribution similar to the elementary students from one- and two-parent homes. Seventeen per cent of elementary school children from one-parent homes received letter grades of A or B or number grades from 80-100, in comparison to 30% of the two-parent children. At the secondary level, 26% of the children from one-parent families attained these grades, as compared to 38% of the children from two-parent families. It was also noted in this report, that secondary school children from one-parent families were twice as likely to drop out of school. A similar study (Brown, 1980) found that children of one-parent families were more likely to be tardy or truant, and were suspended more often than were children from two-parent families. Brown's study also revealed that secondary students from one-parent families were much more likely to be expelled from school than were those who lived with both parents.

IV. COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES

The following is a description of counselling techniques that researchers have suggested could be implemented in an educational setting.

1. Discussion Groups

Drake (1979), Francke (1980) and Wilkinson (1977) found that children of divorced parents benefitted from discussing their feelings. Drake (1979) found that when children of divorced parents talked with other children in similar situations, they shared experiences, expressed their fears and anger and gave each other information. The children, realizing that other children's parents had divorced, felt less ashamed about their own parents' divorce. Francke (1980) found that in a self-help group called "Divorced Kids Group", children gave each other support and clarified their own feelings about their family. Wilkinson (1977) found that being involved in the "Children's Divorce Group" enabled elementary school children to examine realistically their parents' divorce. Some of the activities this group participated in were, role playing of the problems of divorce, puppet plays of coping behaviors, and discussions of the positive aspects of divorce. Thus, discussion groups appear to be beneficial to the children of divorcing parents. Similar groups could be set up for children whose parent has died. They would probably also benefit from this opportunity to express their feelings.

2. Peer Counselling

Peer counselling was used to some extent in the discussion groups investigated by Drake (1979), Francke (1980), and Wilkinson (1977). These studies found that peer counselling helped the children to clarify their feelings and to recognize that other children were experiencing situations similar to their own. Peer counselling was also recommended by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (1980) as an effective way of helping children of one-parent families to cope with the absence of one parent.

V. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Kelly and Wallerstein (1979) found that school often provided children of divorcing parents with routine and a sense of continuity at a time when their family structure was undergoing major changes. Kelly and Wallerstein (1979), as well as several other authors, have suggested ways in which the school could act as an important support system for all children of lone parent families. The following are some of their suggestions.

- Update student records in September and again at midterm by sending home a standard form asking for the names, addresses and phone number of the student, mother and father. Also, note if non-custodial parent should obtain report cards, school notices, etc. (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1980).

- Set up inservices that provide teachers with information about changing family patterns and sensitize them to the negative effects of using perjorative language when discussing one-parent families (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1980).

- Be aware of bias in curriculum and textbooks toward the composition of family units. Counteract this with class discussions on the current realities of family units and the alternatives in family unit composition (Kelly and Wallerstein, 1979).

- Hold school functions that do not request attendance of a parent of a specified sex (Damon, 1979).

- Arrange after-school meetings and parent-teacher conferences to allow the attendance of parents who work (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1980).

- Provide child-care facilities during school functions and parent-teacher conferences (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1980).

- Provide all children with units or courses in coping/survival skills, such as basic food preparation, first aid procedures and dealing with emergency situations (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1980).

- Establish extended school hours, and early morning, noon hour and after-school programs (Kelly and Wallerstein, 1979; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1980).

- Offer support to the children. For example, if the child is experiencing temporary, but evident difficulties in meeting classroom responsibilities, the teacher can acknowledge it by saying, for example, "This is a hard time for you, I know" or by offering the child many opportunities to express his/her feelings through one-to-one sessions, peer counselling groups, discussion groups, drama, etc. (Kelly and Wallerstein, 1979).

- If the school offers counselling to children of one-parent families, ensure that the children do not feel singled out or stigmatized in any way by their participation (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1980).

- Principals and teachers should evaluate, and make use of, resources available to children of one-parent families within their community.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

The following implications are based on results presented in the paper.

A. The incidence of students from one-parent families within Manitoba is increasing. In 1976, approximately three children in each classroom in the province were from families in which there is only one parent. Thus, it appears that the effects of one-parent families on education warrant consideration in Manitoba.

B. Although not all children are affected in the same manner, or to the same extent, single parenthood does appear to affect school behavior and performance among children. Thus, the effects that living in a one-parent family has on a child's academic achievement and behavior at school might be considered by educators.

C. Schools can help children to cope with some of the stresses that are often associated with one-parent families. It appears that many of these practical considerations can be accomplished with little or no cost to the school.

D. Teachers appear to be an important resource person when parents separate. They are a constant, unchanging factor in a young child's life, and can provide support, discipline, and reassurance when needed. Perhaps a greater emphasis could be placed on making teachers aware of the effects of single parenthood on their students, and the ways in which they can offer a child support.

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